

Vacant Property Review Commission

Summary - February 19, 2014

Members present: Chip Crawford, David O'Neill, Bill Johnston, Martina Ockerman

Also in attendance: Derek Paulsen, David Barberie, Jonathan Hollinger

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM.

Paulsen spoke briefly about the list of properties. The Property Valuation Administrator (PVA) has eliminated the new construction properties from the list and Code Enforcement will now check each property for code violations.

Johnston asked how many people call about vacant property in a year. Paulsen responded that about 90 called last year, but we don't know how many are valid at this point.

Crawford talked about the difference between vacant, blighted, and abandoned. Suggested that a simple criteria be published. This criteria can be brought to the commission for review with the <file:///C:/Users/jhollinger/Downloads/VPRCProcess.pdf> list of properties.

There was discussion of the amount of the properties on the list compared to the total amount of parcels in Lexington.

Johnston asked to have the list for review prior to the meeting.

Crawford stated that the commission needs to make a request to Council to set the rate.

Barberie said the rate will be set in August. The total rate cannot exceed \$1.50 per \$100 of property, but it is not clear what counts toward this total.

The commission expressed some concern that the additional tax will not be enough to encourage any action.

O'Neill said there is concern that additional taxes make it more difficult to transfer the property.

Paulsen and Crawford discussed other tools to deal with property, and the ability to retroactively certify that properties meet the legal criteria for taxation.

There was some discussion about the criteria for taxation.

The commission discussed foreclosures. The city is the plaintiff on around 20 foreclosures a year, and part of about 100.

The commission discussed people not paying fines and the need to have tools to transfer property.

Ockerman expressed concern that the punitive route may not be the most effective. If property owners are not responding to fines now, making the fines higher will probably not work either.

Crawford suggested establishing a mission statement and goals for the commission.

The commission discussed the idea of a landbank and a land trust.

Crawford discussed the notification process. suggested that options could be provided to the owner's when they are notified of the commission's determination regarding their property.

Motion by Bill Johnston to approve the December 2013 and January 2014 meeting summaries, seconded by Martina Ockerman. Passed unanimously.

The commission discussed using additional tax revenue from properties to fund code enforcement officer, landbank, demolitions, and/or other programs.

The commission requested that once the commission certifies a list that the properties be mapped to assist in packaging contiguous parcels together. It was also requested that a link to the PVA parcel page be included.

The commission requested a schedule for when they will make presentations to council on the tax rate, the list, and other information.

Motion to adjourn by Bill Johnston, seconded by Chip Crawford. Passed unanimously.